HOLBROOK
PACIFIC SCHOOL
OF RELIGION

WAR SUFFERERS'
RELIEF BULLETIN

"Not to be ministered unto, but to minister"

August, 1945 — Vol. I, No. 6

Repatriation of Yugoslav Refugees

By Grace Augsburger

This letter from a Mennonite relief worker, serving as a nurse in the Middle East under U.N.R.R.A., tells about the transition of Yugoslav refugees from their temporary living quarters in the Egyptian desert to their island homes in Dalmatia. Organized as "flight teams," relief workers attend the refugees on their homeward journey. The relief personnel, representing U.N.R.R.A. and private agencies, had hoped to follow the refugees into their home communities and help them to become re-established, but to date the Tito government has failed to grant entrance permits.—Editor.

This is the end of a hot day in Cairo. Egyptian weather has been quite desirable thus far, but everyone keeps saying that July, August, and September will be worse. Perhaps future plans will prevent us from having the experience of spending a summer in Egypt. As far as we are concerned the work here is nearly at an end, and we are all looking forward to service in other fields.

Flight to Yugoslavia

I have spent very little time at El Shatt camp since May 11, on which date I left on my first Yugoslav flight—the fourth flight to leave Egypt. It was just several days after we had received the sad news of Marie's tragic death and it took all the pleasure out of the trip for me—not that I was afraid, for I know that the Lord takes care of His own in His own way. Along the way I picked up bits of information about Marie's death and when I returned I had the details fairly well on hand. I certainly do miss Marie. We had been together constantly during the past year, and when one is absent from home one is drawn more closely to friends on the field.

My first flight was quite uneventful as I look back on it now and also in comparing it with the second one, which has now passed into history. The first trip was made in five days. We remained in the harbor of Split twenty-four hours, just long enough to unload the refugees and their baggage into smaller boats which took them to their various villages up and down the coast. On our return trip our boat left us at Taranto, Italy, and departed on a mission elsewhere. From here we proceeded to Bari where, after a two-day stay, we returned by air to Cairo. I went back to camp immediately with the expectation of leaving within three days on another flight. But the usual delays set in, and it was seven days before we actually left Port Said for Yugoslavia again.

Second Flight

This flight—my second and the seventh one from Egypt—was one which shall go down in flight history as a most difficult one. We took sixty-nine tuberculosis patients on this trip, eleven chronic medical patients, and 1,300 refugees. Our working hours were long, and many new difficulties and problems arose continually. We also had a burial at sea. Everything seemed to happen. The trip was delayed by stopping over for a twenty-four-hour period at Augusta, Sicily. But at last, after an eight-day journey, we cast anchor in the harbor of Split. In twenty-four hours we

started on our return trip. At Taranto our ship went into dry dock for repairs and we again went to Bari to arrange for return by air travel. There were only four of us, as a doctor and a nurse had remained in Yugoslavia to care for the tuberculosis patients. Our air travel was canceled when it was discovered that we could get transportation on another refugee ship which was returning to Alexandria. So after a three-week absence, I found myself in Egypt again.

Flight teams, as you probably know, are composed of the following: an O.C. (officer in command), an adjutant, a doctor, and two or three nurses depending on the number and kind of refugees taken. Two people from the A.F.S.C. were on the last flight. It was a very congenial group and together we had a nice return trip.

In Yugoslavia

I was ashore in Split both times. We walked around over a large part of the city, viewing the damage done by bombs. The shopping district was a sorry sight. There are very few supplies anywhere, and prices are sky high. We had a jeep ride over parts of the city and went up to the lovely Marijanna Park on the high cliff overlooking the harbor. The view of the city and the harbor from here was most magnificent! I cannot describe how I felt as I looked upon the scene below. Regarding the amount of relief work being done there, I would say that very little has been accomplished during the past months, and the prospects for the future look very dark. I talked with a number of people who have been there for weeks, and everyone feels the same. Yugoslavia wants supplies and not personnel.

In Italy

Italy was a rather interesting place. Prices are terrific. Shoes in the shop windows were from $20 to $30 a pair. One is conscious when walking along the streets of the eyes of passers-by who glance at your shoes. Many people have no shoes at all.

These experiences on flight teams have proved to be interesting and helpful to me. At present no flights are scheduled for several weeks because of the lack of ships. So, I am taking a two-week leave. I expect to go on one more flight sometime. However, if I go to Italy in the near future that will cancel all plans for flight work.

Notes from the Field

Sandstorm in Egypt.—As I am writing this letter the wind is starting to come up strong again. We had our first full-fledged sandstorm yesterday. The wind blows very hard, swirling the sand around just like it does with the snow back home. The sand is swept clean from some spots and piled up at other places. When you look out across the desert it looks as though a gray sheet were hanging in the atmosphere, almost like a light fog. Needless to say, everything in the tents gets covered with a coat of brown, gritty dust. It is much better to be inside a building during one of these storms.—Henry Detwiler.

Visitation Program in Puerto Rico.—Recommendations for visitation work were presented to the unit recently. The P.R.R.A. section, together with adjacent areas, is to be mapped and two persons made responsible to visit all homes within a certain territory during a specified time. Thus, as Jesus sent out His disciples in groups of two, we hope to go out by twos and call upon these families. A report is to be made to the unit at the end of the designated time. The work is to be done voluntarily and is to be considered a calling rather than an obligation. As this great task is begun we hope that it may be the means of bringing the Light of Life to our benighted neighbors.—**Rio La Plata, July, 1945.**

Bro. Miller's Visit in the Middle East.—Orie (Miller) has now been here and gone again. We were very happy to have him visit our unit. Together we went to see U.N.R.R.A. officials and spent the entire afternoon there (July 10). . . . We had a short but pleasant visit at the Tolumbat camp, where we found everyone well but getting ready for the final phases of repatriation. . . . On Wednesday (July 11) we came back to Cairo and found Samuel Yoder waiting for us. . . . We arrived at El Shatt just before lunch on Thursday. Immediately after lunch Bro. Miller met with the entire group and then after a few minutes' rest had a private interview with each one. . . . Friday, he and Samuel Yoder left by train for Cairo.—Delvin Kirchhofer.

The WAR SUFFERERS' RELIEF BULLETIN is published monthly by the Mennnonite Central Committee, Akron, Pa., Any Material printed herein may be republished. Printed in U.S.A.

Thinking about Relief

Shadows of the Coming Winter

It is a matter of common opinion on the part of authorities in both governmental and private relief agencies that the coming winter will be the peak year of need in Europe. It may well be the worst the Continent has experienced in a century. Food, clothing, and fuel supplies will be almost nonexistent and subsistence will have to be maintained by production from a few areas which have escaped the ravages of war and a slow trickle of supplies from the outside. The situation is such that, unless drastic provisions are made, famine and pestilence will strike!

The termination of the war in May of this year was too late to make possible the resumption of a sizable agricultural economy in the war areas. Futhermore, the long years of war had brought about a slow strangulation of agricultural production by infesting fields with mines, flooding rich, productive farms, displacing thousands of tillers of the soil, reducing arable land for use as air fields and landing strips, the decline of cattle and draft animal population, the lack of fertilizers, insecticides, and farm tools and machinery. The unavailability of inexpensive and small metal items, such as nails for shoeing horses and general repair purposes, bogs down the initiative and efforts of many farmers who are making a desperate effort to produce the necessities of life.

The winter of 1945-46 will likely be a grim one for the millions of Europe, also, because of the disruption of transportation and the dearth of fuel. The destruction of railroads, canals, and roads was carried out with a thoroughness characteristic only of the military. The difficulty in moving and transshipping much-needed commodities can only be imagined. The lack of fuel, especially coal, is so basic to the restoration of normal living that many authorities, especially governmental, consider the supply of fuel to Holland, Belgium, and France a requisite of top priority. Indeed, without fuel, the people of Northwest Europe will be the victims of widespread sickness and epidemics during the winter months. These conditions will be aggravated by the lack of adequate clothing.

These many relief needs of Europe are revealed to us in many publications during the present months. As Christians we must remain sensitive to the suffering of our fellow men and not become calloused to relief conditions in the way we are inclined to pass over the terrible bombings and other cruelties of modern warfare. Before we can carry out a Gospel witness through relief work we must look on the field and become aware of the need. As we catch a vision of the need we will need to pray, give, and go.

The Greatness of the Work

Sometimes we are inclined to speculate on the implications of Christian service and how great and far-reaching the results may be. It may well be true that the response and devotion of Christians in America to the task of relief service in Europe during the coming winter may decide the destiny of Christian forces there. We know that if famine, and the disorder and demoralization which follow, is not staved off, Western Europe may be closed to evangelization in somewhat the same manner the door was closed in Eastern Europe.

But it is not for us to think about results and to speculate regarding the significance of the work we have been called upon to do. Our concern is to make certain we have discerned the will of God and to labor in devotion to Christ. When serving the Lord we are devoted to a person and our supreme loyalty is to Him.

Not by word of lip, full often,
Is the world convinced of truth,
But the deed of loving service,
From the heart, brings fullest proof.

—E. O. Sellers.

RESPONSIBILITY

I have a clean, soft bed on which to sleep,
I have a toble set with gracious things—
How can I pray the Lord "my soul to keep?"
How can my heart lift up on joyous wings
While there are those about me in the night
Who toss on filthy rags and cannot rest,
Who have no food, no raiment, and no light?
How can I sleep unless I do my best
To ease and comfort them, and how can I
Be deemed a follower of the Christ until
I heed humanity's unbroken cry
And move to feed the hungry, heal the ill?
God help me keep remembering—help me to see
How great is my responsibility.

—Grace Noll Crowell.

Alsatian and Swiss Mennonite Relief

This letter represents the first report from M. C. Lehman since his arrival in Switzerland. It was sent from Basel on July 18.—Editor.

I have had a meeting with the relief committee of the Swiss Mennonite conference in regard to relief work in Alsace-Lorraine. They have some funds ready for such work. Fritz Gerber still has about 6,000 Swiss francs in his account from the Mennonite Central Committee. With this fund and the amounts forthcoming a sizable work in behalf of Mennonites and others in Alsace should be possible. Bros. Miller and Goering are of the mind that I should concentrate my relief efforts in this area. This was decided in Paris when we met last week.

Swiss Co-operation

I believe it is highly desirable to do this work co-operatively with the Swiss brethren, for they have had considerable experience in relief work. They also have a leadership which is able and dependable. Fritz Gerber and Fritz Goldsmith, both pastors, have been appointed by the Swiss Mennonite relief committee to go to Alsace-Lorraine with me just as soon as we have all our government permits. We applied for them in Bern a week ago and they should be here soon.

I am very happy for the co-operative spirit which the Swiss brethren are showing in this work. They have given me a fine welcome and have asked me to speak at their conference next month on American Mennonitism and the outlook for Mennonitism throughout the world. I have now worshiped twice in Mennonite churches here in town—once at Schenzli and once at Holee Strasse. Fritz Goldsmith is pastor of both these churches. The Holee Strasse church has half of its membership across the Rhine and they are temporarily worshiping in Germany until political matters make it possible for them to again come over for services.

Work in Switzerland

I find Basel a fine place to live and work although a little expensive. I have a hotel room here, but when more personnel arrives for relief work we will need an apartment, which will be cheaper and more satisfactory.

Work among refugees in Switzerland is difficult independently of the larger government organizations. Bro. Gerber has distributed the funds sent by the M.C.C. through government organizations, which was the best he could do. He and I will look further into the possibilities for work among displaced groups this afternoon when we go to Bern. Switzerland is rapidly expatriating refugees in order to conserve her own food supplies.

The Swiss Mennonites are very happy to receive the greetings of American Mennonites and are very happy to work with us.

I will stay on in France after Bros. Gerber and Goldsmith return to Switzerland. Food, medicine, and clothing distribution will probably develop as necessary phases of our work in Alsace. From reports I get from people coming over the border there is great need along this line. The work in Alsace will be a part of our general relief program in France.

I believe that God is opening a good work for us here. Just what the pattern will be is not clear yet, but there seems to be every indication that we will have permission to proceed with our relief activities. He will lead us in the way we should go. —M. C. Lehman.

Swiss Brethren Active

Our Swiss Mennonite congregations have now started to collect special funds, to help our Alsatian brethren who are in need. Our executive committee has appointed two brethren, Bro. Goldschmied in Basel and myself, to apply for a visa for France and if possible also for Germany (Palatinate), to investigate conditions among the Mennonites there and how we can help them. The American brethren would probably have more freedom of movement on the international scale than we Swiss people would. . . .

Finally, this senseless murder of human beings with all its atrocities has ceased in at least one part of the world. How thankful we are to the Lord for this. We, in Switzerland, cannot be grateful enough to the Lord, that this time we have again been spared from the war and its atrocities, although we did not deserve it. We are hoping that this peace may not be like in Jeremiah 6:14. But the world will not know real peace until the coming again of the true Prince of Peace, our Lord Jesus Christ who will come with all His host. Yes, come, Lord Jesus, come soon!

—Fritz Gerber.

Visit to Mennonites in Brazil

Willard Smith, together with Gerhard Giesbrecht and Jacob Isaacs, Mennonite ministers in Paraguay, visited the Mennonite colonies in Brazil in June, 1945.—Editor.

Our first visit was to the Mennonites near Curitiba. On the evening of the day of our arrival, June 6, we met with the leaders to discuss the plans for the next few days. On the first night I made a few remarks in German, bringing greetings and also a few words of encouragement in the Christian life. I included a few words about the work of the M.C.C. and also alluded to Bro. Fast's (H. A.) coming in August. I gave this once at Curitiba and twice at Witmarsum. Bros. Giesbrecht and Isaacs brought strong Gospel messages and Bro. Giesbrecht told also about the Indian mission work in the Chaco. The services were well attended.

Besides the preaching services, additional meetings with the preachers were held where problems were discussed and questions asked. Much was learned about each other's problems and the conditions that obtain in both Brazil and Paraguay. Otherwise the time was taken up with visiting people who have relatives and friends in Paraguay. These services, meetings, and visits were very much appreciated and, I am sure, were helpful.

Economical Progress

Economically, there is little question but what the Curitiba Mennonites, as a whole, are faring better than any of the other Mennonites in Brazil and Paraguay. There are now about two hundred families near Curitiba, a few of them living in the city itself. Others work in the city but have their homes in the country. Most of the Mennonites here, however, have dairy cattle and sell milk in Curitiba. The appearance of the buildings on these small dairy farms indicates that materially these Mennonites, by and large, are making considerable progress, and they have done this in a few short years. Another indication of this progress is the fact that a number of the Curitiba Mennonites, together with some from Witmarsum, took this occasion to send money along back to Paraguay, either to pay old debts of long standing or to help with the Indian mission work.

Spiritually and culturally, however, the story is different. There is deep concern in Curitiba over this point. The greatest problem has to do with the young people. So few of them are Christians. And this is a difficult time in Brazil to combat this indifference. Because of the law against the use of German they have had to adjust to the use of other languages in their school and church work. The religious services are held in Low-Dutch and Portuguese. One of the ministers, Peter Klassen, can use the Portuguese fairly well, and he usually gives part of the service in that language.

The Problem of Schools

A much more important problem in my mind than that of language is that of the schools. Brazil does not permit private schools and furnishes public schools only up to, and including, the third grade. In the cities, of course, more educational facilities are supplied. The teachers must be Brazilian and so far the Mennonites had had nothing to say about the selection of these teachers. That is true also in Witmarsum. The universal testimony is that the teachers supplied them so far have been very inefficient. Thus, educationally, there seems to be no opportunity, at least at present, to use this great institution for the molding of Christian character as Mennonites understand that term. This of course is very hard on a people who have believed in Christian education as the Russian Mennonites have.

Witmarsum

On Monday, June 11, we started for Witmarsum, accompanied by David Koop, a preacher of Curitiba. We arrived at Witmarsum on Wednesday, June 13. We had meetings with the religious and civil leaders, discussing problems of mutual concern and possible ways of solving these problems. There was the usual visiting also, as time permitted, of people who had relatives and friends in Paraguay.

Economically, Witmarsum, while not making the progress that is being made by the Curitiba Mennonites, is nevertheless doing fairly well. All the people speak of the very difficult times at the beginning and of the better times since. The war has increased the prices of things they have to buy, but, to a greater extent than in Paraguay, it has also increased the prices of things they have to sell. Our impression is that the people here, on the whole, are faring as well as those in the Chaco, al-

though little if any better. Spiritually and culturally conditions are somewhat better than in Curitiba, though here also there is considerable room for improvement. A larger percentage of the young people are in the church here than in Curitiba, but entirely too many are not. There is also deep concern here over this situation. The same educational privations obtain in Witmarsum as in Curitiba with regard to private schools, but the situation is worse in that the people cannot avail themselves of city schools as can the Curitiba Mennonites. There are many cases of children growing up, reaching the ages of twelve, thirteen, or fourteen, and still unable to read and write.

Stoltz Plateau and Sao Paulo

On June 18, Bros. Giesbrecht, Isaacs, and Koop, accompanied by Bro. Nikkel, traveled to near-by Stoltz Plateau, where one service was held that evening. Out of some ninety families that settled here in the beginning, there remain now only nine, and it appears that these will soon be leaving, going, as did the others, either to Witmarsum or to Curitiba. The testimony is well-nigh universal that economic conditions on the plateau were extremely difficult and the Mennonites cannot be blamed for moving elsewhere.

On June 21, I left Curitiba by train for Sao Paulo, where a number of Mennonites are also located. I visited briefly with a dozen or so of the Sao Paulo Mennonites, contacting a number of them in the home of a Bro. Rempel. Economically, as near as I could find out, the Sao Paulo Mennonites, on the whole, seem to be doing quite well. One cannot help feeling, however, that they are paying a high price for this relative prosperity. These Mennonites, of whom it is said that there are some fifty, have no services of their own, and it is to be feared that their Mennonitism, especially under such circumstances, will sooner or later he swallowed up in the big city.

Looking back at the trip as a whole, Bros. Giesbrecht and Isaacs and I very definitely feel that it was very much worth while—well worth the money, effort, and waiting that it involved. The brethren in Brazil gave many expressions of appreciation for our visit. This was the first time that Paraguayan Mennonites have visited the Mennonites of Brazil, officially or unofficially.

Aside from the direct benefits of preaching the Gospel and admonishing and visiting the brethren, one of the most important results of this trip has been the strengthening of ties of fellowship between the Mennonites of Brazil and those of Paraguay and also those of North America. Some told me directly, and others clearly assumed and implied it in their conversation, that they are seeking this closer fellowship with and help from the North American Mennonites in solving their problems and in preserving historic Mennonitism in Brazil. I thus believe that the M.C.C. has an opportunity to be of greater service to the Brazilian Mennonites than it has been in the past.—Willard H. Smith.

Bengal Rehabilitation

April

This month we were kept busy with the house-building program. I supervised the work at Champhati, where we were doing work in seven different villages. We had as many as forty men working for us in these villages. Rains during the last part of the month made it impossible to cart more materials, so the work was postponed temporarily. During this month we helped a total of fifty-eight families, of which seventeen were given new houses and the rest helped with roof repairs. We have succeeded in purchasing fifty bundles of yarns for the industrial center and one loom was started. I made several investigation trips to weaving villages.

May

We are endeavoring to bring the housing reconstruction to a close this month, as materials are very high priced and the season for this kind of work is over. Over two hundred fifty families have been helped with new or repaired houses. In one village I introduced the American custom of a "house raising bee." I got all the able-bodied men to help in the construction of the houses for the widows and to celebrate we all had a feast! The industrial center at Champhati shows some development, with several looms producing cloth. I had the opportunity to tell of our relief work in several of the Army Christian Fellowships. One group was so interested that they raised money to build one new house for a widow and her five children.

—Clayton Beyler.

Peace Notes

Wages on Dairy Farm Service

Representatives of the three church agencies and the National Service Board for Religious Objectors met with Selective Service officials on July 24 to discuss a number of concerns pertaining to the administration of C.P.S. dairy service units. Chief of these concerns was the matter of assignees receiving cash gifts from employers above the wages paid to the Government. The monies earned by C.P.S. men on dairy farms are placed in a frozen fund in the U.S. Treasury.

Selective Service reported that of eight counties investigated in New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut, twenty-eight of seventy assignees admitted they were receiving cash gifts from their employers. The church agencies had gone on record as not encouraging such gifts but urging that C.P.S. men be permitted to receive them if the employers so desire. S.S.S., however, feels that this practice is a definite infringement upon the ruling made by the Comptroller General of the United States in declaring that "wages earned by conscientious objector assignees are monies due the United States Treasury and are required by the terms of the Revised Statutes to be deposited and covered into the Treasury at as early a date as practicable." A notice has been sent from S.S.S. National Headquarters to all employers of C.O. assignee farm labor, ruling that the practices of cash gifts be discontinued.

C.P.S. Men in Mennonite Base Camps

The church agencies have been able to lighten the financial responsibility of supporting C.P.S. by transferring assignees into maintenance projects or special projects. In the beginning of 1945, however, it became apparent that a very large number of the inductions into C.P.S. were Mennonite, and that a heavy responsibility was falling upon the M.C.C. and its supporters because these inductions into base camps far exceeded the transfers of other C.P.S. men into special projects. Selective Service had agreed to open special projects in order that the strength of M.C.C. base camps would not have to exceed 2,200. This did not work out exactly as planned because of the large number of inductions and the reluctance of men in the camps to transfer rapidly to special projects.

A recent statistical report from the C.P.S. Section at Akron, however, shows that as of July 15 the goal of 2,200 in base camps had almost been reached. As of this date 2,259 men were in maintenance projects and 1,926 on special projects. The same report also reveals that as of the above date 4,188 men were under Mennonite administration, or 48.11 per cent of the total number of men in C.P.S.

C.P.S. Alumni Association

A current subject of discussion in C.P.S. camps is the desirability of a post-C.P.S. organization. The following paragraph represents the thinking of the men on this subject in one base camp:

"The consensus of opinion is that there should be some type of post-C.P.S. organization. Concerning its aims, it should be a source of fellowship, aid in keeping alive friendships formed in C.P.S., and be a means of contact among the men. It should help to keep alive and vital in our own lives the concept of nonresistance, and this as a way of life; its importance as a means of helping others to follow the nonresistant way of life cannot be overestimated."

Fire Fighting

C.P.S. men located in the Rocky Mountain and Pacific Coast areas have had occasion to fight a large number of fires during the past several weeks. The parachute jumpers at Missoula, Montana, were especially active. One smoke jumper reports his first experience on a fire as follows:

"We had our first fire on Wednesday, July 12, and it lasted through Saturday. It was in the adjacent Klamath National Forest, and, of course, on a ridge top. The country is so rough there that the only available jumping spot was four miles from the fire. By the time we arrived the fire had spread considerably, and it was necessary to call in fifty convicts and nine Indians. We had to hike out twenty miles to the nearest road. For me it was a great experience and the climax of all the training."

The church must belong to, and be at home in, every kind of human community, and yet must always be different from them all.

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